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UNCLAS OTTAWA 000942

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: CANADA INFORMED OF NEW SOUTH ASIA STRATEGY

REF: STATE 55644

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1. (SBU) As requested reftel, on March 29 polmiloff delivered the Fact Sheet on Broadening the U.S. strategic partnership with South Asia to Keith Fountain, Acting Director of the South Asia Division (PSA) at Foreign Affairs Canada. Fountain said that he normally handles Afghanistan policy and would be interested to hear more about the USG's evolving strategic relationship with the new government. He indicated that he was not in a position to comment on the information regarding India and Pakistan, but undertook to share the Fact Sheet with the respective desk officers in his office.

2. (SBU) Fountain explained that PSA Director Arif Lalani was on prolonged absence for mandatory language training the first four months of the year and that different officers were rotating into his position through the end of April. As appropriate, post will report any subsequent comments/discussion with PSA staff regarding our new policy.

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DICKSON